SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Yes, Sir, that includes the LPC-based appliances too.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, it is true that Chinese goods are coming to the Indian market. It is also true that some Chinese goods, which came to the Indian market in a flood, have disappeared from the Indian market.

The Indian consumer is extremely price-sensitive and quality-sensitive. For example, some time ago, we had batteries coming in here at one or two rupees. But those batteries have virtually disappeared now. We deal with a rush of-imports through various methods. One is customs duty and countervaling duty, which I have already answered. The other is anti-dumping duty. If there is evidence, based upon a complaint and investigation, that any foreign goods are being dumped into India-and 'dumping' is defined in the law—then, anti-dumping duties are imposed. And a number of Chinese goods do suffer anti-dumping duties today. The third is the safeguard duty. If there is a sudden surge in imports, there is another provision of law which allows Government to impose a safeguard duty. These are the various provisions that we have.

I submit, with great respect, that the answer is not in raising the customs duty. On the one hand, we say customs duties must come to ASEAN levels. And, therefore, while customs duty and the countervailing duty are one part of the protection available to Indian maufacturers, there are other legal provisions available to deal with goods which are dumped into India, or, where there is a surge in imports.

Depletion of ground water

*285. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ground water table in all the geographical regions in the country is depleting;

(b) whether uncontrolled sand mining on the river beds is one of the major causes for the unprecedented depletion of ground water;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any Central norm/rule pertaining to the mining of sand on the river beds;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, what steps Government propose to take to control the menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (f), It is a fact that the ground water table in many parts of the country is depleting due to excessive withdrawals of ground water. As per the latest assessment carried out jointly by the Central Ground Water Board, NABARD and the States, out of 5723 assessment units (Blocks/ Mandals/Talukas) in the country, 839 units have been categorized as 'Over-exploited' *i.e.* the annual ground water extraction exceeds the annual replenishable resource and significant decline in long term ground water level trend has been observed either in pre-monsoon or post-monsoon or both. In addition, 226 units are 'Critical' *i.e.* the stage of ground water development is between 90% and 100% of annual replenishable resource and significant decline is observed in the long term water level trend in both pre-monsoon and post-monsoon periods. There are 550 semi-critical units, where the stage of ground water development is between 70% and 100% and significant decline in logn term water level trend has been recorded in either pre-monsoon or post-monsoon period.

No corelation between uncontrolled sand mining on river beds and depletion of ground water has been established.

Sand being a minor mineral, mining of sand is a State subject. There is no Central norm/rule pertaining to mining of sand on the river beds. However, some States like Andhara Pradesh, Haryana and Kerala have laid some restrictions on sand mining from the river beds.

SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Sir, there are reports that because of unmindful sand mining, a number of bridges on national Highways are being damaged. This is especially applicable to Kerala. A number of bridges are reported to be unsafe. My question to the hon. Minister is whether any study has been conducted to ascertain the damage caused due to this unrestrained and unmindful sand mining. If so, are there any concrete measures to rectify this situation and meet this danger?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, there are a few States which have the rules or the laws on sand mining and Kerala is one of them; Andhra is the other Both of them have their own laws to take care of sand mining. They are taking such decisions. It is a fact that they are very worried. Whatever technical know-how they need, we do give it to the State Governments. So far as roads are concerned, it is for the Surface Transport Ministry to see. They take care of that.

SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Sir, my second supplementary is this. River sand is actually categorised as a minor mineral. Because of that categorisation, the Union law is not available now. It has been entrusted to the States. As the Minister rightly said, Andhra pradesh, Haryana and Kerala have initiated certain rules to restrict this thing. But, in practice, and I can say this from our experience, enforcement is not at all effective and that is leading to many difficulties. The Minister is saying the same thing which he has stated in his reply. My point is not only regarding bridges, it is also about the aquatic habitat; and it is very much applicable to fish. I can say that out of the total 600 species of fish, 200 belong to Kerala. Now, because of this sand mining, heavy damage is being caused to them; and authentic reports are there. Are we going to entrust this question to the States alone? This is a big national problem that is coming up. We have to.seriously contemplate the idea of enacting a law restricting this thing. I am asking whether the Union Government is willing to initiate such a measure or not.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: It is a good suggestion, Sir. We will explore this possiblity.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: उपसभापति जी, यह गिरता हुआ भूजल का स्तर हम सब के लिए चिंता का विषय बना हुआ है। आज संयोग से वित्त मंत्री जी भी यहां उपस्थित हैं, वित्त मंत्री जी ने अपने पिछले बजट भाषण में एक लाख वाटर-बॉडीज का जीर्णोद्धार करने की बात कही थी। तो मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगी कि क्या उसके लिए बजट राशि स्वीकृत हो गई थी और उन एक लाख वाटर-बॉडीज में से कितनी वाटर-बॉडीज अभी तक रेनोवेट हुई हैं, कितनों का अभी तक जीर्णोद्धार हुआ है?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, pilot projects have been taken up, and these pilot projects are going on in various States. Quite encouraging reports are coming about them. In the recent National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, these projects are also included.

Enough money is available there. Further funds are not required now. but the funds will also be allocated for the national Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. That will be spent under that Programme. It is specifically covered under that Programme.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: कितनी out of one lakh, जो उन्होंने प्रोमिस किया था?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Now, it is beyond one lakh. More money will come under that project. One of the areas they have to work on is watershed projects. so, that has been included in that.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, in almost all parts of the country, the water table has gone down. Perhaps, this year, for the first time, there are heavy rains in South India. The position has improved there. What are the scientifically and technologically correct methods adopted internatinally to improve the water table? How is the Government going to improve the water table? It is of great concern to all of us. Unless the Government takes some action in this regard, we will face a serious shortage of water in future. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what mechanism they have got to improve the water table.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, traditionally there was shortage of water in Sourth. But, now it is overflowing. There is excess water, especially in the constituency of our hon. Finance Minister. I think they are getting quite good rainfall there. Haphazard urbanisation is one of the main problems which has caused floods this year, not only in Chennai, or, Karnatka, or Andhra pradesh but also in Mumbai and some parts of Kolkata. so, the Urban Development Ministry is taking care of that. In one of the reports I have seen myself that plastic bags and plastic bottles which are thrown in drains clog the water outlet system. Like that, many such things clog the outlet. I am sure that some steps will be taken by the Urban Development Ministry in checking the haphazard growth in metro cities, corporations and municipalities.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the reply of the hon. Minister says that some State like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Haryana have taken some steps in restricting mining, as far as sand is concerned. Sir, in Andhra Pradesh, there is an Act called the Water, Land and Tree Act, WALTA. Similar Acts are also there in Kerala and Haryana. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal with the Union Government to bring out a uniform legislation so as to control sand mining.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, according to the information given to me, sand mining has nothing to do with water gap, or, the misuse of mining can create water hazards at a place. But, since many Members have raised this issue in the House, I will get it examined. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri P.G. Narayanan. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, I would request the hon. Minister to see the written answer of this question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On this question, I have got about 12 requests for putting supplementaries. This is a very important subject. I think by putting questions only, it will not be addressed properly. ...*(Interruptions)*... If some hon. Members give a notice for Half-an-Hour Discussion, then, it would be taken up. ...*(Interruptions)*... As it is, I have 12 requests before me for putting supplementaries. It is a very important question, and every Member wants to put a supplementary on this. I think it will be better ...*(Interruptions)*...इसीलिए मैं कह रहा हूं, हाफ एन आवर के लिए आने दीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)

श्रीमती माया सिंह: उपसभापति जी, मैंने अपने विशेष उल्लेख में मध्य प्रदेश का जिक्र किया था। ...(व्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Everbody is interested in water level, ground water level and how it is being done. If some hon. Members give a notice, it will be taken up in the form of Half-an-Hour Discussion. You give a notice for that. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: That will be a good thing, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the next question.

*286. [The questioner Shri Janeshwar Mishra was absent. For answer *vide* page 31infra]

Development and promotion of tourism

*287. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of various projects for the development and promotion of tourism in the country, State-wise and Project-wise, pending for clearance; and